



# NCARNG Weekly Safety Newsletter



May 8, 2015

## North Carolina State Safety Office Contacts

State Safety Manager  
COL John Mullinax  
X46253

State Occupational  
Health Manager  
MAJ Christina Henderson  
X46206

State Safety Specialist  
1SG Gregory Greene  
X46420

State Safety Specialist  
Waylan Green  
X46153

Industrial Hygiene Tech  
SFC Wayne Benner  
X46388

Lodging Coordinator  
Newsletter Editor  
Meredith Dixon  
X46637

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Visit us at [NCGKO](#)  
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information visit  
[US ARMY  
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## SPORTS SAFETY



Playing sports can be fun, but it can also be dangerous if you are not careful. Below are some important injury prevention tips that can help you have a safe sports experience.



### Injury Risks

All sports have a risk of injury. In general, the more contact in a sport, the greater the risk of a traumatic injury. However, most injuries are due to overuse. Most injuries occur to ligaments (connect bones together), tendons (connect muscles to bones) and muscles. Stress fractures can also occur from overuse. Most frequent sports injuries are sprains (injuries to ligaments) strains (injuries to muscles), and stress fractures (injury to bone) caused when an abnormal stress is placed on tendons, joints, bones and muscle.

### To reduce the risk of injury:

- Time off. Plan to have at least 1 day off per week from a particular sport to allow the body to recover.
- Wear the right gear. Players should wear appropriate and properly fit protective equipment such as pads (neck, shoulder, elbow, chest, knee, shin), helmets, mouthpieces, face guards, protective cups, and/or eyewear. Young athletes should not assume that protective gear will protect them from performing more dangerous or risky activities.
- Strengthen muscles. Conditioning exercises during practice strengthens muscles used in play.
- Increase flexibility. Stretching exercises before and after games or practice can increase flexibility. Stretching should also be incorporated into a daily fitness plan.
- Use the proper technique. This should be reinforced during the playing season.
- Take breaks. Rest periods during practice and games can reduce injuries and prevent heat illness.
- Play safe. Strict rules against headfirst sliding (baseball and softball), spearing (football), and body checking (ice hockey) should be enforced.
- Stop the activity if there is pain. If you have already hurt yourself playing a sport, make sure you recover completely before you start up again. If possible, protect the injured part of your body with padding, a brace, or special equipment. When you do start playing again, start slowly.
- Avoid heat injury by drinking plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise or play; decrease or stop practices or competitions during high heat/humidity periods; wear light clothing.



### Sports-Related Emotional Stress

The pressure to win can cause significant emotional stress for a child. Sadly, many coaches and parents consider winning the most important aspect of sports. Young athletes should be judged on effort, sportsmanship and hard work. They should be rewarded for trying hard and for improving their skills rather than punished or criticized for losing a game or competition. The main goal should be to have fun and learn lifelong physical activity skills.



For more information on Sports Safety visit [www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/pages/Sports-Injury-Prevention-Tip-Sheet.aspx](http://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/pages/Sports-Injury-Prevention-Tip-Sheet.aspx)





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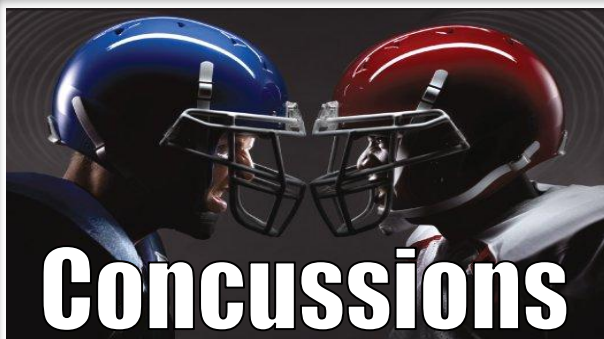
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## Concussions

### What Are the Signs of a Concussion?

Concussions can be tricky to diagnose. Though you may have a visible cut or bruise on your head, you can't actually see a concussion. Signs may not appear for days or weeks after the injury. Some symptoms last for just seconds; others may linger. It's important to recognize the signs of a concussion so you can take the proper steps to treat the injury. Below are some common physical, mental, and emotional symptoms a person may display following a concussion.

- confusion or feeling dazed
- balance problems or dizziness
- ringing in ears
- clumsiness
- blurred vision
- behavior or personality changes
- slurred speech
- sensitivity to light
- concentration difficulties
- nausea or vomiting
- sensitivity to noise
- memory loss
- headache
- sluggishness

### Different Types of Concussions

- Grade 1 (Mild) concussion: symptoms last for less than 15 minutes. There is no loss of consciousness.
- Grade 2 (Moderate) concussion: there is no loss of consciousness but symptoms last longer than 15 minutes.
- Grade 3 (severe) concussion: the person loses consciousness, sometimes just for a few seconds.

### What Should I Do if I Have a Concussion?

The seriousness of a concussion dictates what kind of treatment you should seek. Most people with concussions fully recover with appropriate treatment. But because a concussion can be serious, safeguarding yourself is important. Here are a few steps to take:

- Seek medical attention. A health care professional can decide how serious the concussion is and whether you require treatment. If you have suffered a grade 1 or grade 2 concussion, wait until symptoms are gone before returning to normal activities. If you have sustained a grade 3 concussion, see a doctor immediately for observation and treatment.
- Take a break. If your concussion was sustained during athletic activity, stop play and sit it out. Your brain needs time to properly heal. It is better to miss a game than the whole season.
- Guard against repeat concussions. Repeat concussions cause cumulative effects on the brain. Successive concussions can have devastating consequences, including brain swelling, permanent brain damage, long-term disabilities, or even death.

### Prevent a Concussion: Protect your Brain

By its very nature, a concussion is unexpected, so it is tough to prevent. But there are several common-sense precautions you can take to lessen the possibility of traumatic brain injury.

- Wear protective equipment. Wearing headgear, padding, and mouth and eye guards can help safeguard against traumatic head injuries. Ensure that the equipment is properly fitted, well maintained, and worn consistently.
- Drive and ride smart. Always wear a seatbelt, obey posted speed limits.
- Don't fight. Concussions are often sustained during an assault.

\*\*For more information visit <http://www.webmd.com/brain/concussion-directory>

The most common type of traumatic brain injury is called a concussion. A concussion is most often caused by a sudden direct blow or bump to the head. The brain is made of soft tissue. It's cushioned by spinal fluid and encased in the protective shell of the skull. When you sustain a concussion, the impact can jolt your brain. Sometimes, it literally causes it to move around in your head. Traumatic brain injuries can cause bruising, damage to the blood vessels, and injury to the nerves.

